

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 NEA-10 EUR-25 DRC-01 /146 W

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R 170900Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3773

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 04954

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE IN MR-1

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM DANANG APRIL 16 H/W
REPEATED TO YOU. QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 143

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE IN MR-1

REF: A) SAIGON 4755; B) SAIGON 4573; C) SAIGON 4432

D) SAIGON 3146

1. SUMMARY: WITH ITS APRIL 14 DEADLINE FOR FORMALIZATION UPON
IT (AND UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT UNCERTAIN ABOUT PASSAGE OF THE
LAW AMENDING DECREE LAW 060, PERMITTING A FURTHER TWELVE MONTHS
TO ORGANIZE), THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE HAS ESTABLISHED
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WORKING CHAPTERS IN EVERY PROVINCE-CITY JURISDICTION IN MR-1

EXCEPT QUANG TRI, CLAIMING REGION-WIDE MEMBERSHIP OF ABOUT 60,000. INFORMED SDA OBSERVERS FORECAST THAT THE DANANG, QUANG NGAI, AND POSSIBLE QUANG TIN CHAPTERS WOULD COMPLETE REGISTRATION IN TIME. MOST LOCAL LEADERS, HOWEVER, REGARD THE ALLIANCE AS MERELY A CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT PARTIES ALLOWING EACH TO CONTINUE LEGAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOP ITS OWN STRENGTH WITHOUT SHARING RESOURCES AMONG THE PARTNERS. STRENGTH FOR THE ALLIANCE WILL BE FOUND IN AREAS WHERE ONE OF ITS COMPONENTS WAS PARTICULARLY DOMINANT; THE COMBINED INFLUENCE OF ALL PARTNERS IN OTHER AREAS WILL REMAIN INSIGNIFICANT. THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP ON THE SDA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES TENDS TO BE LITTLE-KNOWN AND COLORLESS. PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES HAVE APPARENTLY NOT YET RECEIVED DIRECTIONS ON DEALING WITH THE SDA, AND THERE IS DIS-AGREEMENT AMONG THE ALLIANCE PARTNERS IN SEVERAL AREAS ON THE QUESTION OF COOPERATING WITH THE AUTHORITIES AND THE DEMOCRACY PARTY IN ORGANIZING AND LATER IN CONTESTING ELECTIONS. MOST LOCAL LEADERS DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO SEE THE SDA FORMALIZED NATIONALLY AND COMPETE WITH THE DP IN THE 1974 LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE GREATER LEGITIMACY FOR THE EXPECTED DP VICTORIES. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE SDA LEADERSHIP IS DEVELOPING A POLICY CALLING FOR GREATER GOVERNMENT "GUIDANCE" OF THE ECONOMY AND CHARACTERIZED GENERALLY BY POSITIONS TO THE LEFT OF THE THIEU GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. CURRENT STATUS OF ORGANIZING EFFORTS: THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP OF THE COMPONENT PARTIES OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (SDA) HAVE ESTABLISHED WORKING CHAPTERS IN EACH OF THE PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES OF MR-1 EXCEPT QUANG TRI. VO TRANG (VNQDD ADVISOR TO THE CENTRAL SDA PRESIDUM), WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATING ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION, AND LTC NGUYEN KIM TUAN (PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL MOVEMENT, OR PNM), WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL PRESIDUM, FORECAST THAT THE DANANG, QUANG NGAI, AND POSSIBLY QUANG TIN CHAPTERS WOULD COMPLETE THEIR REGISTRATION BEFORE THE PRESUMED DEADLINE OF APRIL 14. (UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT, THEY WERE UNCERTAIN WHETHER DECREE LAW 060 WOULD BE AMENDED TO PERMIT A FURTHER TWELVE MONTHS TO ORGANIZE.) THE ACTIVE CHAPTERS HAVE ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING RESULTS: THUA THIEN CLAIMED 7,000 SIGNED UP OUT OF THE 10,000 REQUIRED; HUE 1,100 CLAIMED OUT OF 5,000 REQUIRED; QUANG NAM, 26,000 CLAIMED

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WITH ONLY 10,000 REQUIRED; DANANG, 8,000 CLAIMED WITH 8,000 REQUIRED; QUANG NGAI, 12,000 CLAIMED WITH SOME 10,000 REQUIRED; QUANG TIN, 8,200 CLAIMED OF THE APPROXIMATELY 8,000 REQUIRED. NEITHER TRANG NOR TUAN BELIEVED THE QUANG NAM CHAPTER WOULD BE REGISTERED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH ITS LOCAL LEADERS CLAIM MORE THAN ENOUGH MEMBERS.

3. NATURE OF THE ALLIANCE AND ITS LEADERSHIP: OF THE PRIMARY PAR-

TIES PARTICIPATING IN CENTRAL VIET NAM, THE VNQDD, THE PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL MOVEMENT (PNM), AND THE WORKER-FARMER PARTY (WFP), THE LATTER APPEARS TO BE MAKING THE LEAST EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION IN THE MR AS A WHOLE, DESPITE THE INTIMATE CONNECTION OF ITS LEADERSHIP WITH THAT OF THE LABOR UNIONS AND DESPITE THE POTENTIAL OF A PRIMARY ROLE FOR LABOR IN THE ALLIANCE. ONE REASON GIVEN FOR THIS LACK OF EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION IS THAT THE WFP IS NEW ITSELF, IT LACKS CADRE, EXPERIENCED LEADERS AND ORGANIZERS, AND THUS IS NOT ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE MORE. A DIFFERENT REASON IS SUGGESTED BY THE COMMENTS OF TWO WFP OFFICIALS IN THUA THIEN AND QUANG NAM, BOTH OF WHOM DOUBT THAT THE SDA, AS NOW CONSTITUTED, CAN BE A TRUE OPPOSITION PARTY. BOTH ARE ALSO SKEPTICAL OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE COMPONENT PARTNERS WILL WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

4. LOCAL SDA LEADERS GENERALLY REGARD THE ALLIANCE AS NOTHING MORE THAN A CONFEDERATION OF SOVEREIGN PARTIES AND BELIEVE THAT ITS PRIMARY UTILITY IS IN FACILITATING THEIR CONTINUED POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN DEFIANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO REDUCE DRASTICALLY THE NUMBER OF PARTIES. ASIDE FROM DEALING WITH THE AUTHORITIES AS AN "ALLIANCE", EACH PARTY REMAINS ALMOST SOLELY CONCERNED WITH DEVELOPING ITS OWN ORGANIZATION AND THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE SHARING OF RESOURCES, ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS AND CADRE, OR INFORMATION AMONG THE PARTNERS. SOME LOCAL LEADERS HAVE STATED OUTRIGHT TO CONGEN OFFICERS THAT THE SDA IS A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT. ITS EXISTENCE IS DICTATED BY THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP OF THE COMPONENT PARTIES RESPONDING TO SUCH NEEDS AS THAT FOR A UNIFIED NATIONALIST FRONT AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS, OR THE NEED TO IMPRESS THE "TWO-PARTY DEMOCRACIES" ABROAD, OR THE NEED TO SURVIVE BY OPERATING STRICTLY WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTY LAWS OF THE GOVERNMENT. WHEN THESE NEEDS DISAPPEAR, THEN POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY WILL RETURN TO MORE TRADITIONAL, ATOMIZED VIETNAMESE STYLE.

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5. POLITICAL ACTIVITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE PRIMARILY THAT OF INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGN PARTIES. THE ALLIANCE CAN EXPECT TO FIND STRENGTH IN AREAS WHERE ONE OF ITS COMPONENTS WAS PARTICULARLY PREDOMINANT, BUT THE ADDED INFLUENCE OF OTHER PARTNERS IN SUCH AREAS WILL AMOUNT TO LITTLE AND THE COMBINED INFLUENCE OF ALL PARTNERS IN AREAS WHERE NONE WAS PREDOMINANT BEFORE WILL CONTINUE TO BE INSIGNIFICANT.

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3774

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 04954

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: STATUS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE IN MR-1

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM DANANG APRIL 16

H/W REPEATED TO YOU. QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 143

6. WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP OF THE SDA IS LITTLE-KNOWN AND COLORLESS. THIS IS PROBABLY DUE TO MORE PROMINENT PARTY LEADERS REMAINING ALOOF UNTIL THE ALLIANCE IS PROVED A GOING CONCERN, OR TO THE NECESSITY TO AGREE ON NON-CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES FOR TOP PROVINCIAL ALLIANCE POSITIONS, OR TO THE APPEAL WHICH OTHER OPPOSITION POLITICAL GROUPS HAVE HAD FOR GOOD LEADERS, ORGANIZING CADRE AND YOUNG RECRUITS.

7. TRANG CONTENTED THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF SEVERAL TRADITIONAL PARTIES HAS STAGNATED IN RECENT YEARS OF POLITICAL DIFFICULTY DUE TO: A) THE IMPAIRMENT OF STRONG RURAL PARTY STRUCTURES THROUGH LOSS OF LANDS, PERMANENT HOMES, TERRITORIAL SECURITY AND STABLE VILLAGE AUTHORITY; B) THE UNWILLINGNESS TO COALESCE WITH
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THE DOMINANT PARTY OF THE GOVERNMENT; AND C) THE LACK OF ANY

ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL ROLE BETWEEN THEIR ENEMIES THE COMMUNISTS AND THE GOVERNMENT'S STRINGENT POLITICAL PARTY LAWS. AS A RESULT, IN TRANG'S VIEW, THE LEADERSHIP WILL REQUIRE TIME TO BE RE-INVIGORATED WITH PARTICIPATION IN A LEGAL POLITICAL ROLE.

8. RELATIONS WITH THE GVN: ALTHOUGH LOCAL GVN AUTHORITIES HAVE APPARENTLY NOT YET RECEIVED FIRM DIRECTIONS ON DEALING WITH THE SDA, SEVERAL OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THEY WANT TO FACILITATE THE ALLIANCE'S REGISTRATION. LOCAL SDA LEADERS IN SEVERAL PROVINCES, HOWEVER, DISAGREE ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES OR THE DEMOCRACY PARTY (DP) IN ORGANIZING. ON THE ONE HAND, SOME LEADERS ARE CONCERNED THAT: A) THE PEOPLE WOULD DESPISE THE "OPPOSITION" PARTY FOR ORGANIZING IN COLLUSION; JGL THE DP WOULD HAVE LEVERS TO INFLUENCE THE SDA, TO GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT ITS ACTIVITIES, OR EVEN TO SABOTAGE IT AT A LATER DATE, IF IT ASSISTED IN THE ORGANIZATION; AND C) THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DP WOULD REALIZE GREATER LEGITIMACY FROM QUICK FORMALIZATION OF A SECOND PARTY, BUT THE SDA ITSELF WOULD APPEAR WEAK AND LACKING IN INDEPENDENT RESOURCES TO TRULY CONTEST ELECTIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME LEADERS AMONG THE PNM BELIEVE THAT NATIONALISTS MUST CHOOSE EITHER TO COOPERATE IN MAINTAINING THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT TO PRESERVE THE REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM OR TO WORK AGAINST IT AND PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS. SINCE THE GOVERNMENT NOW NEEDS A SECOND, "OPPOSITION" POLITICAL PARTY TO ENHANCE ITS LEGITIMACY AT HOME AND ITS MORAL ASSETS ABROAD, "CONSTRUCTIVE" NATIONALIST OPPOSITIONISTS MUST COOSE TO ASSIST IN CREATING SUCH A PARTY, EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT ACHIEVES GREATER ADVANTAGE FROM IT THAN THE OPPOSITION.

9. REGISTRATION AND THE 1974 LOCAL ELECTIONS: LOCAL SDA LEADERS, WHO ARE NOT INDIFFERENT, AS WELL AS SEVERAL WELL-INFORMED OBSERVERS AMONG OTHER OPPOSITION GROUPS, BELIEVE THE SDA WILL BE REGISTERED NATIONALLY AND PREPARED TO COMPETE IN THE 1974 PROVINCE AND CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS. MOST DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO SEE THE SDA COMPETING AGAINST THE DEMOCRACY PARTY IN 1974 AS A MEANS OF PROJECTING GREATER LEGITIMACY FOR THE OVERWHELMING VICTORY EXPECTED FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PARTY. TRANG, HOWEVER, REMAINS WARY THAT THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE WILL NOT RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF PROOF OF RESIDENCE OF PARTY MEMBERS IN TIME. TUAN NOW THOUGHT THAT WHILE REGISTRATION WOULD COME "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE"

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REGARDLESS OF THE POSSIBLE YEAR'S EXTENSION OF DEADLINE, IT WOULD NOT COME BEFORE THE 1974 ELECTIONS.

10. THERE IS STILL DISAGREEMENT LOCALLY AS TO WHETHER THE SDA SHOULD ENCOURAGE AND ACCEPT COOPERATION WITH THE DEMOCRACY PARTY IN ANY ELECTIONS. IN ANY EVENT, CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING WILL BE SERIOUS OBSTACLES FOR THE SDA, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING THE LIKELIHOOD OF PROVINCE AND CITY-WIDE CONSTITUENCIES.

STRONG SHOWINGS IN DISTRICTS WHERE SDA COMPONENT PARTIES HAVE BEEN DOMINANT CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE OVERCOME BY CONSISTENT DP TURNOUTS IN ALL OTHER SECTIONS OF THE LARGER CONSTITUENCY.

11. ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY FOR CLEAR POLICY OUTLINES TO EMERGE FROM THE NEW PARTY, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THE SDA LEADERSHIP WANTS TO MAKE THE ECONOMY AN ISSUE AND TO STAKE OUT GROUND TO THE LEFT OF THE THIEU GOVERNMENT. THE CENTRAL PRESIDUM IS REPORTED BY TRANG TO BE FAIRLY AGREED THAT THE ECONOMY REQUIRES MORE "GUIDANCE" BY THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT ABANDONING ENTIRELY THE CONCEPT OF A "FREE ECONOMY". THE ISSUE OF RESOLVING THE WAR AND DEALING WITH THE COMMUNISTS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE A POINT OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SDA AND THE DP.
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